

# Utah's First Plane Flew, But Briefly, in 1911

By CLYDE SNOW

Early one morning in July, 1911, a strange-looking machine was rolled from a large barn on the outskirts of the little community of Erda, Utah.

Dyke Palmer, designer and builder of the strange craft, fussed with the motor. A moment later the engine burst into life with a deep-throated roar. Mounting himself at the controls, Palmer taxied around the field several times. He opened the throttle wide, the plane teetered and bounced across the field. Finally it lifted into the air and skimmed along four or five feet off the ground. He was not quite ready for a test flight, so he cut the power and let the plane drift down for a landing. This was the first airplane to be built and flown in Utah. The whole thing started some six months before when Dyke Palmer decided to build an airplane.

First he built a small model plane, using old clock works for a motor. In the model Palmer incorporated all the ideas he wanted to use in a large plane, but he did not have money enough to buy materials for a full-scale airplane.

## Corporation Formed

Then Joe Kauffman came into town and saw the model plane in action. He sensed the money-making possibilities of a full-size plane and offered Palmer financial assistance.

Kauffman formed a company and sold stock to promote the enterprise. The new firm was called the Utah Aviation Co. Bill Smith, a prominent Erda farmer, was the first general manager. Dyke Palmer was given 50% of the stock for his design and his labor in constructing the new plane.

In April of 1911 construction was begun on the plane at Grantsville. It was a biplane with 14-foot wingspread. Four motorcycle-type wheels comprised the landing gear. Spruce and cane were used for the main supporting members, and rubberized linen was used to cover the wings and other surfaces. Airplane dope, as used today, was unheard of by these builders.

In telling of his construction problems, Mr. Palmer said: "It was impossible to get aircraft fittings at that time. I had to make turnbuckles out of motorcycle spokes. Plain galvanized wire was all I could find for flying, drag and landing wires. I used three-fourth inch gas pipe for wheel supports on the landing gear."

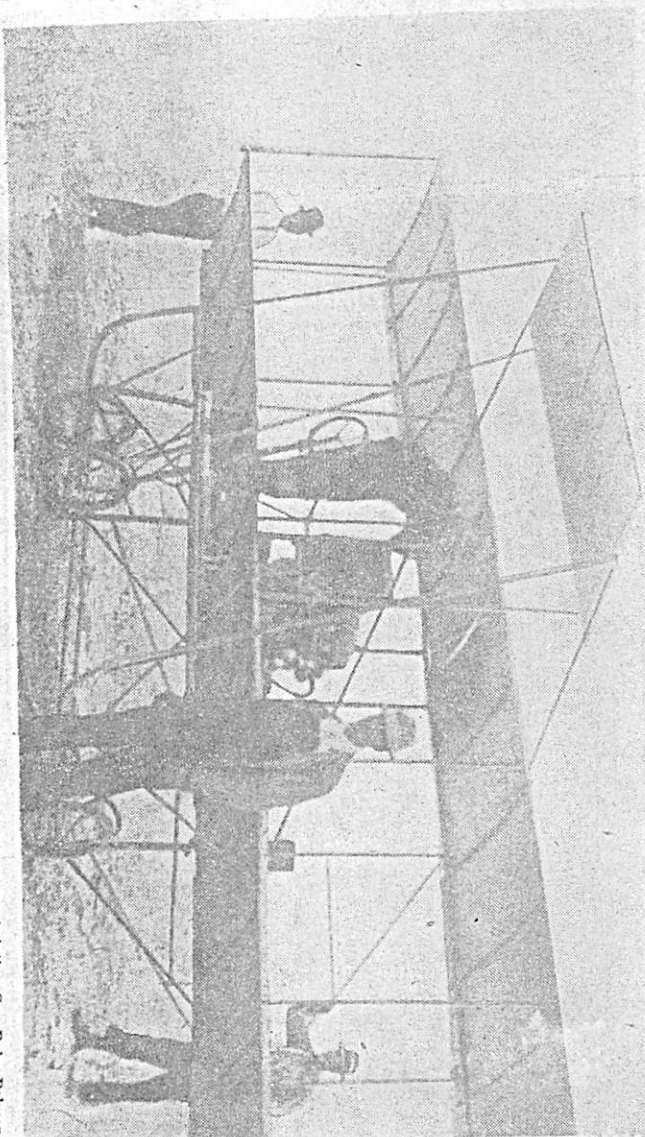
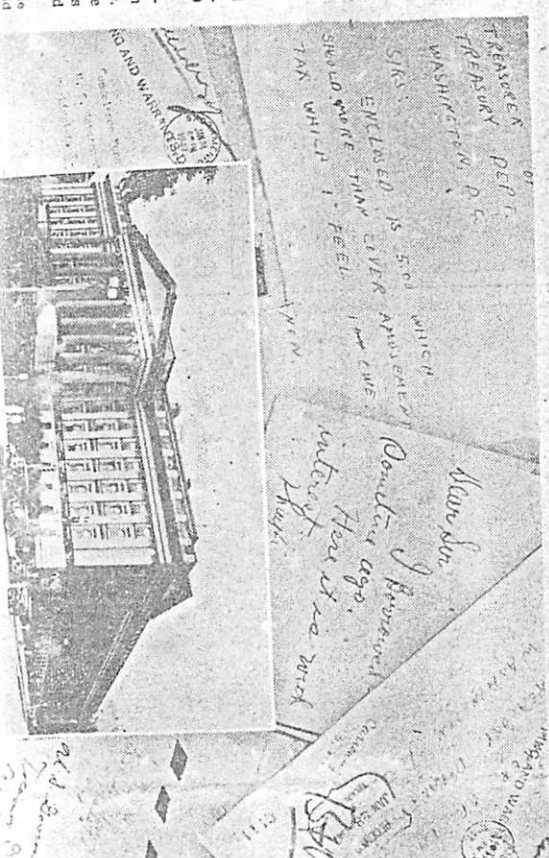
## Water-Cooled Engine

Toward the end of June, the plane was nearly completed. An order for an engine was sent to a company that had just started to make a radial air-cooled engine. The engine manufacturer wired that delivery could not be made on an engine for 30 days.

"Hello!" Bill Smith shouted when the telegram was read. "We want to be flying in 30 days."

An order was wired immediately for a 60-horse Emerson two-cycle, water-cooled engine. Bill Smith had the airplane moved from Grantsville to his barn at Erda, and Palmer tested the new engine.

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This was the first plane built and flown in Utah (1911). The four men who pioneered in the field of aeronautics are, left to right, Joe Kauffman, founder of Utah Aviation Co.; Dyke Palmer, inventor of the crude craft; Phillip Algett and Anton Anderson.

## Consciences Are Valuable Source of U. S. Revenue

By HERBERT HOLLANDER

The conscience fund, that unique and intensely human account on the presic ledger of Uncle Sam's treasury department which has been built for more than a century and a quarter on the altar of remorse, is doing a booming business.

As a matter of fact, more money has been received during the past few years from anonymous donors seeking to atone their consciences than at any time in the long history of the fund.

It not only reached record proportions in the war years, which follows long established precedent but it is continuing to run at a pace which seemingly indicates that it is going to take quite a few years of peace for some folks to set their minds at rest. The treasury tells you that in the last several years its mail has produced numerous conscience fund contributions from people who were in the armed forces as well as civilians. In a good many of these instances the treasury says, small remittances are being made for army and navy supplies which

liberately defrauded the government, that he now was suffering the most painful qualms of conscience and that he "wanted to make things right."

Included in that letter, which was passed around by astonished treasury employees until all the little force had read it, was a neatly folded \$5 bill.

There was nothing to do with the money but to put it into the general fund, where all such contributions go today. For statistical and accounting purposes they are covered as "miscellaneous receipts, monies received from persons unknown." So

## Half at a Time

A chap who must have done business on rather a larger scale once sent in \$8000 in currency. But the money was cut exactly



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When landing the plane, he struck a cross ditch in the field and damaged a wheel. Mr. Palmer, in telling of this incident, said, "I didn't have the control cables hooked up so I couldn't guide the plane away from the ditch."

## Aljett Succeeds Smith

Smith quit as manager of the Utah Aviation Co., and Phillip Aljett was chosen manager in his place.

The plane was repaired and everything readied for the next flight. In telling of this last eventful flight, Mr. Palmer said, "I taxied around the field a few times and then turned into the wind. I made a careful check of my engine and control, then I opened the throttle and took off just as the propeller cut the landing wheel nearly in two. I made the landing with little more damage to the plane."

Phillip Aljett, convinced that with a little tinkering and fixing the plane could be kept flying, called a stockholder's meeting, and an assessment was levied on the stock. Dyke Palmer had worked all summer constructing the plane and couldn't pay his share of the assessment. He was promptly kicked out of the company.

For three years the Utah Aviation Co. hired different men to work on the airplane, but none of them could make it fly.

## Logan Exhibition Flops

Finally, the Utah Aviation Co. was invited to give an exhibition at Logan. Twenty-five per cent of the gate receipts was all the Utah Aviation Co. would get if the plane did not fly, and 75 per cent if the plane could actually leave the ground.

At Logan, every trick in the bag was tried to get the plane

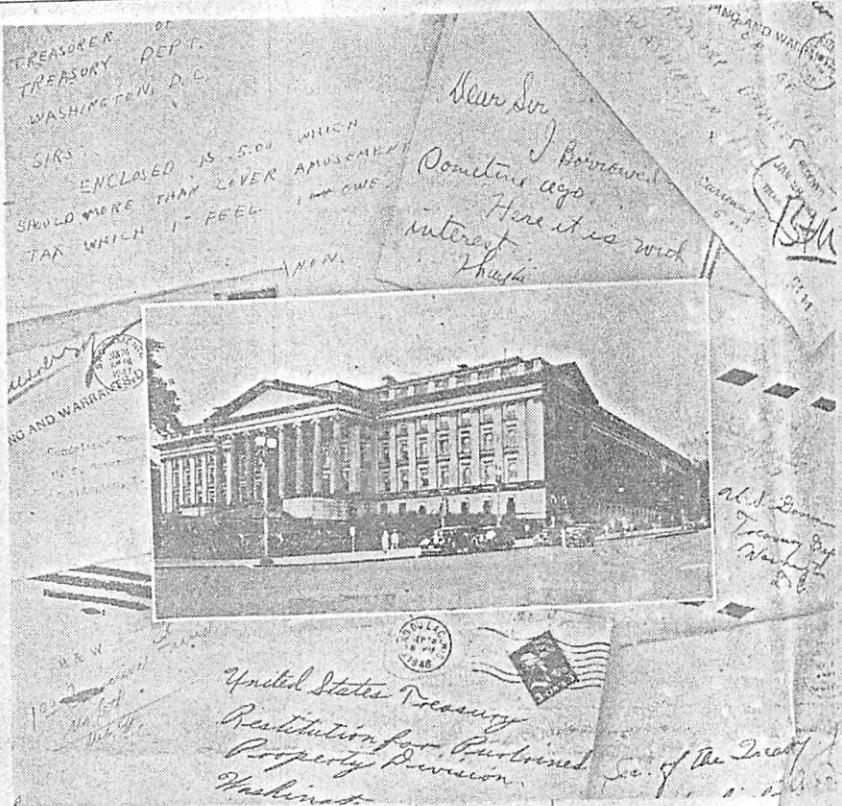
airborne, but the plane would not fly. At last, in desperation, the officials of the Utah Aviation Co. returned to Grantsville and sought out Dyke Palmer. Palmer reluctantly agreed to see if he could make the plane fly.

## Ignominious Finale

Upon arriving at the railroad depot in Salt Lake City, where the plane rested on a flat car, Palmer carefully looked the machine over. Many and varied changes had been made on its structure. Palmer called Aljett and the other directors of the company together and said, "Gentlemen, so many things have been changed on this plane, it will have to be completely rebuilt before it will ever fly again."

This was the death blow to the Utah Aviation Co. There was no more money with which to rebuild the plane, thus passed another colorful incident in the history of Utah.

This was the first plane built and flown in Utah by four men who pioneered in the field of aeronautics.



Almost daily the treasury department, center, gets contributions to its unique conscience fund, which remorseful folk have been building for the Sam for more than 30 years. Typical letters as shown.

## TYROLEAN EASTER

# In Vermont Old Rites Revive

NEW YORK, March 29 (AP)—The way Easter rabbits and yellow chicks, colored eggs and new clothes happened to get mixed up in the ancient religious celebration of Easter is being demonstrated in America by a Tyrolean family.

Although they now consider themselves seasoned New Englanders, the Baron and Baroness von Trapp and their brood have transplanted to their Vermont home the same colorful ritual that is followed by country folk in their native Salzburg region.

Authentic setting for the family observance is a 600-acre farm in the Green mountains—very much like their Austrian Alps—on which the Trapps have built a big Tyrolean-style house complete with jigsaw-trimmed overhanging balconies, as well as their own little chapel and numerous outdoor shrines.

## Entire Family Participates

With 13 in the family—father, mother, seven daughters, three sons, and their spiritual and musical mentor, Father Frans Wanner, who left Austria with them when the Nazis marched in—there is no difficulty in finding plenty of participants for

Apostles' last meal with their Master.

After dinner, the Trapps do not go to bed, but stay awake all night, praying and singing hymns, "to keep His company in prison."

On Good Friday, members of the family speak only when absolutely necessary; and even the church bell is stilled. The day is devoted to solitary prayer and meditation. There are only two scanty meals—a noon of cream soup, and a supper of water and "Kreuzbrot," little buns with crosses baked out on top.

## Easter Sunday

Everyone in the household rises before sunrise on Easter morning. The four elder daughters go to a woodland spring to carry home "Easter water." Each pitcher must be brimfull, and if not a drop of water is spilled the bearer may expect to be married before the following Easter.

The season's festivities end on Easter Monday, with the children's sport of egg-rolling. Johannes and his eight sisters, Rosemary and Eleanore, share with their new American friends from neighboring farms this old Austrian custom.

# Conscience Source

The conscience of Uncle Sam's treasury on the altar of the fund.

As a matter of fact, the fund is an anonymous donor.

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the donors of these here and overseas.

Figures secured here reveal graphically how contributions have made a tremendous leap forward in recent years. From \$100,000 in 1914 to \$3,000,000 in 1945, when the donations amounted to the largest in history. The previous high had been 1916, when the nation sent to the treasury this most curious of

## Record Filed

The 1945 record beaten in the fiscal year 1946, however, when no less than \$777 came in. And the fiscal year 1947 maintained their high level.

In 1811 the treasury letter which decided anonymous writer

"DRUGS OUT-OF-1 HERE'S MAIL C

WE HAVE PACKED F

Here's a con-

sturdy enough all the active hood - 7 steel, Al-hol chain is galv-

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The Policyowners and Friends

of

THE PENN MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY



## 25 YEARS AGO: SEPTEMBER 1964



8 Pop Mech Sep '89

### Salute To The Tinkerer

Short-field takeoff and landing was the objective a quarter-century ago. The innovative solution, developed by Willard Custer of Hagers-town, Maryland, was the channel wing, the technique of placing a pusher prop in a semiducted flying surface. The vacuum produced by this configuration literally sucked air over the wings and plucked the craft off the field. Stall speed was also reduced. But the aircraft failed to find a market.

## MD-11's First Flight

LONG BEACH, CA—McDonnell Douglas has begun flight testing of its long-awaited MD-11, a follow-up to the troubled DC-10.

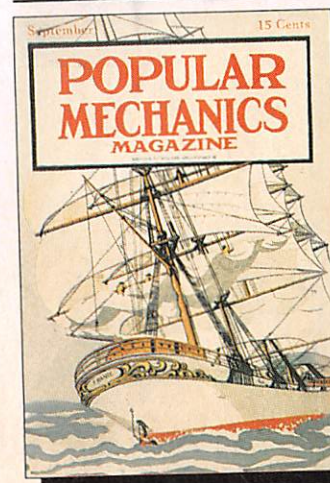
The new McDonnell Douglas trijet will seat between 250 and 400 passengers, depending on class layouts. Its range of more than 8000 miles beats that of a DC-10 by 27 percent. One reason: improved aerodynamics, thanks to wingtip winglets, shorter horizontal stabilizer and an extended tail cone.

MD-11 tests its wings on first flight. Testing is now underway prior to airline delivery later this year.

Further economies will come from a highly automated flight deck that reduces crew size from three to two. Six cathode-ray tubes read out data from operational, navigational and engine systems, and most duties of a flight engineer are handled by computers.

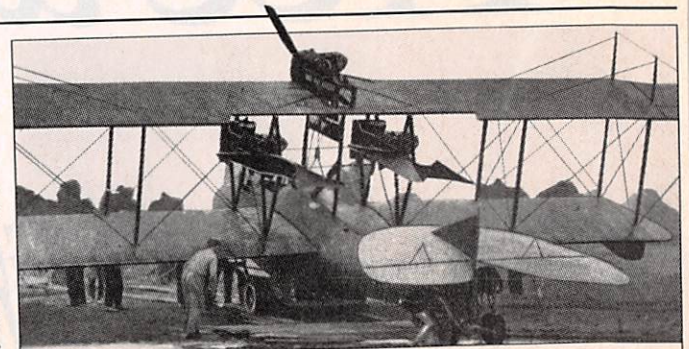
Backlogged orders for MD-11s already top 300.

## 75 YEARS AGO: SEPTEMBER 1914



### Goodbye To Sail

Square-rigged ships were fast retreating from the high seas, replaced by more powerful steam engines—and an upstart that would later transform the business of heavy hauling. The diesel engine was making steady progress in maritime commerce, and a PM survey spotlighted 24 ocean-going vessels equipped with the innovative internal combustion powerplant. But reliability, as with any emerging technology, was still a distant dream.



**Try For The Atlantic**  
Glenn H. Curtiss continued his pioneering efforts in aviation at Lake Keuka, one of the glacier-formed Finger

Lakes of western New York, focusing on a prize of dramatic proportions—crossing the Atlantic. His platform: the flying boat America.

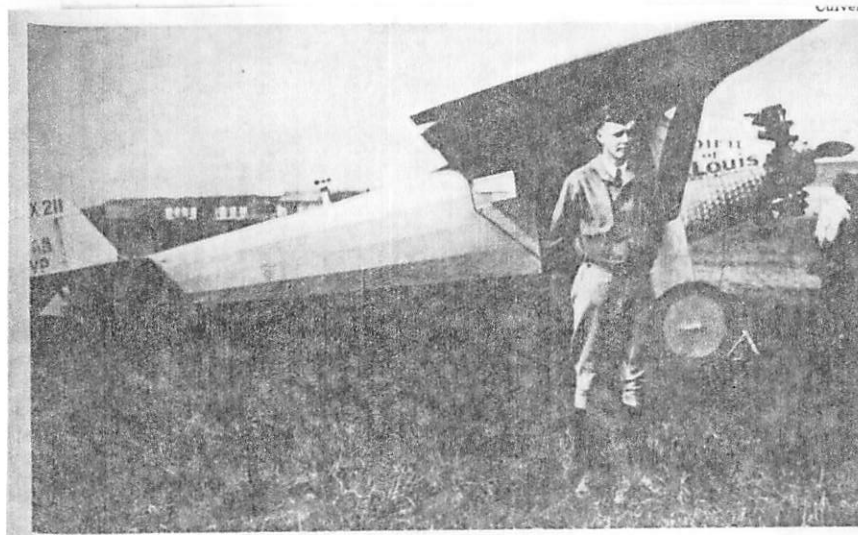
Popular Mechanics Sep 1989



Wright Brothers' 1903 Flyer biplane

WIDE WORLD PHOTO





The "Lone Eagle," as Lindbergh was called, made the first solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean. His historic journey in 1927 in the *Spirit of St. Louis* took 33½ hours and covered more than 3,600 miles (5,790 kilometers).

... AND THE BARREN PLACE IS A FRUITFUL FIELD

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### FLYING

The first airplane to land in Wasatch County came in 1921 when Lt. Russell L. Maughan flew an Army DeHaviland plane into Heber to pay a call on his mother-in-law, Mrs. David Fisher.

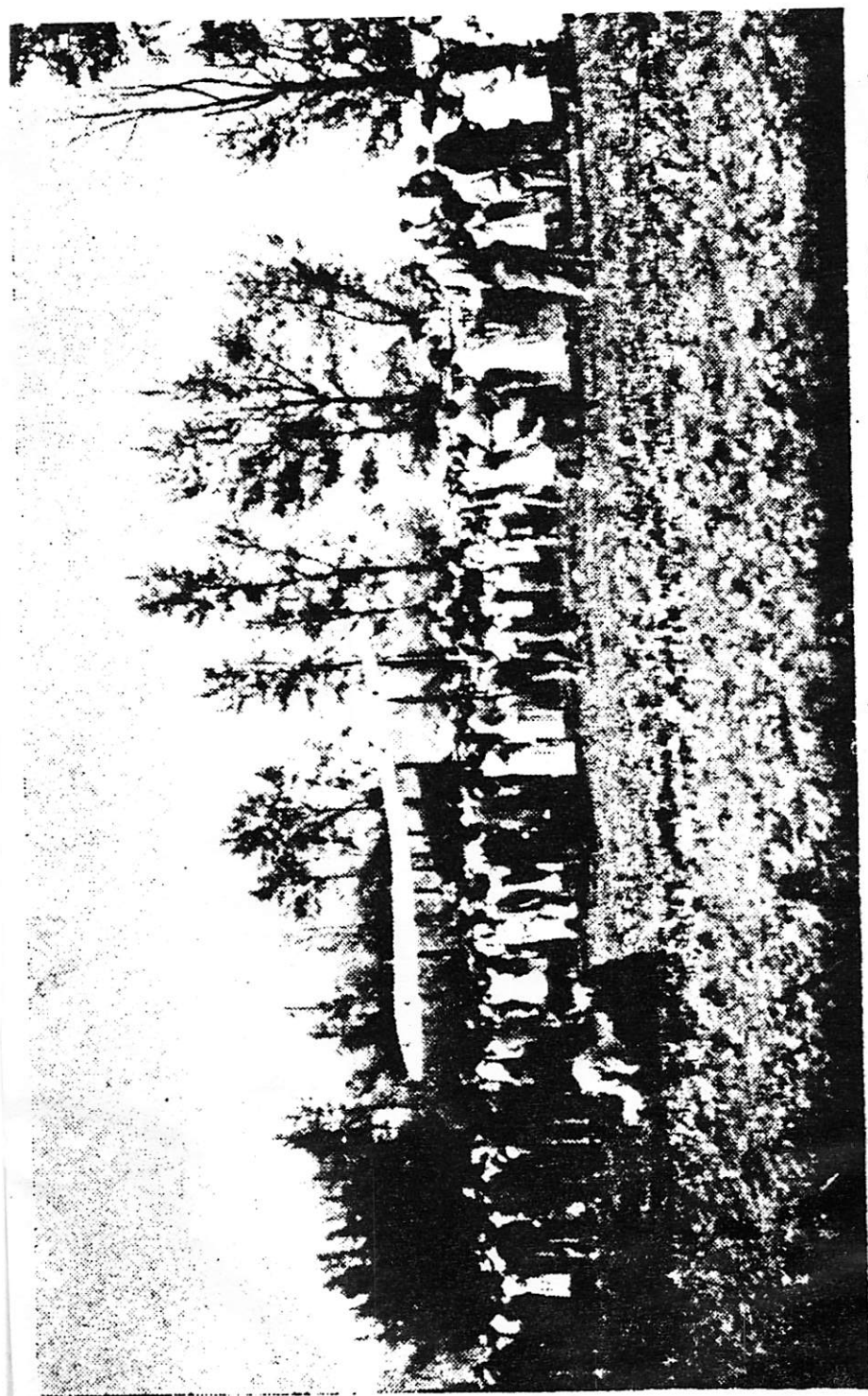
Lt. Maughan later won international fame when, on June 21, 1925, he left Mitchell Field in New York at dawn and flew non-stop to San Francisco by dusk.

When he came to Heber he landed on the James W. Clyde farm at Sixth South and Main. It was the first time many of the residents had seen an airplane. Schools were dismissed the following day so that students could witness the "take-off."

In later years a modern up-to-date airport was built south of Heber for private as well as emergency aircraft use.



Lt. Russell Maughan flew the first airplane into Heber in 1921. Schools were closed and people gathered to look at their first flying machine. Shown here is some of the crowd that gathered around the old DeHaviland plane.



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of Provo City were also honored. Music was furnished by quartets from Heber and Provo and by the Heber Brass Band.

After the program the large crowd adjourned to Heber Social (old hall) Hall where they were served free food between 4 and 7 p.m. A dance in Turner's Hall during the evening concluded the festivities. The special train left Heber shortly after 10 p.m. and arrived in Provo at 12:30 a.m.

Of the day's activities, the "Wave" commented:

"All seemed to enjoy themselves during the afternoon and evening, and we believe the visitors went home feeling that they had been well treated by the people of Heber and having a somewhat warmer feeling toward us than they formerly had."

The coming of the railroad gave rise to a number of related businesses, including "hack" service. Frank Carlile of the Heber Livery Stable was one of the most reliable drivers of the time. He met all the trains leaving town or arriving. Often his hack was so loaded with townspeople, traveling salesmen or other travelers that two or three had to stand on the step at the rear of the buggy. His reputation was for reliability, and people knew they could always catch their train if they rode with Frank Carlile.

Station agents that have followed Mr. Sullivan include A. A. Tyree, assisted by Nate C. Coleman; a Mr. Harmon; Joseph Ely who served some 20 years, and the present agent, Roger Felt, who has been at the station some 19 years.

Advancements in truck transportation and the convenience of automobile travel has cut deeply into the railroad's business, so that the train makes only one run into the valley each week at present.



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